

Amendments to the Claims:

Please cancel claims 6, 24 and 28 without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof, amend the claims as follows and add the following new claim.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) An apparatus for handling sheets containing information thereon, comprising:

a movable sheet transfer member that is movable, and which includes having a transfer surface for contacting which contacts a selected one of the sheets containing the information thereon and transferring so as to transfer the selected sheet along a transfer direction[[.]];

a sheet supporting surface area disposed so as to be contactable with the selected sheet which is being transferred, said sheet supporting surface area extending such that it contacts the sheet between the transfer surface and the information reading point, and;

an information reader arranged along the transfer direction of the selected sheet so as to face a surface of the selected sheet which is being transferred and including: delimiting an information reading range within which the information contained on the selected sheet is readable from the selected sheet, and by the information reader, which information reading range includes an information reading point at which the information contained on

the selected sheet is read from the selected sheet by the information reader;  
said information reading point being located within the information reading  
range;

wherein, as seen in a view direction which is perpendicular to both of a  
thickness direction and a transferred the transfer direction of the selected  
sheet, a tangential line, at a boundary point of the transfer surface of the  
sheet transfer member from which the selected sheet starts to separate from  
the transfer surface of the transfer member, extends in a side area of an  
imaginary straight line passing through the boundary point and the information  
reading point and the boundary point, wherein the tangential line intersects so  
as to intersect the sheet supporting surface area as seen in the view direction  
to press the selected sheet against the sheet supporting surface area, at a  
position between the boundary point and a furthest extent of the information  
reading range from the boundary point;

wherein the boundary point corresponds to a point at which the sheet  
transfer member contacts the selected sheet[[.]]; and

wherein the boundary point and the sheet supporting surface area are  
distant spaced from each other in a direction perpendicular to the imaginary  
straight line, and the selected sheet is pressed against the sheet supporting  
area at a position between the boundary point and the information reading  
range.

2. (canceled)

3. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the sheet supporting surface area extends to guide therealong to the information reading range the selected sheet.

4. (canceled)

5. (canceled)

6. (canceled)

7. (currently amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a supplemental movable sheet transfer member ~~that is movable, and which includes having~~ a supplemental transfer surface contactable with ~~diagnosed in opposition to the movable transfer member which contacts the~~ selected sheet to facilitate transfer ~~of the selected sheet, by the supplemental sheet transfer member, wherein a tangential line of the boundary point of the transfer surface of the sheet transfer member intersects with a tangential line of a second boundary point of the supplemental transfer surface of the supplemental sheet transfer member from which the selected sheet starts to separate away from the supplemental transfer surface of the supplemental sheet transfer member as seen in a view direction perpendicular to a thickness direction and a transferred direction of the selected sheet.~~

8. (currently amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

a supplemental movable sheet transfer member that is movable and which includes having a supplemental transfer surface contactable with diagnosed in opposition to the movable transfer member which contacts the selected sheet to facilitate transfer by the supplemental sheet transfer member of the selected sheet, and

first and second press members respectively opposing the sheet transfer member and supplemental sheet transfer member such that the selected sheet is pressed between the sheet transfer member and the first press member in a first press direction and between the supplemental sheet transfer member and the second press member in a second press direction, wherein the first and second press directions intersect as seen in a view direction perpendicular to a thickness direction and a transferred direction of the selected sheet.

9. (currently amended) An apparatus for handling sheets containing information thereon, comprising:

a movable sheet transfer member including roller having a transfer surface for contacting a selected one of the sheets containing the information thereon and transferring the selected sheet, along a transfer direction;

a sheet supporting surface area for contacting the selected sheet, which is being transferred;

an information reader arranged along the transfer direction to face a surface of the selected sheet which is being transferred, and including: delimiting an information reading range within which the information contained

on the selected sheet is readable from the selected sheet by the information reader, [[and]]

the information reading range including an information reading point at which the information contained on the selected sheet is read, said information reading point being located within the information reading range,

a press member roller opposing the sheet transfer member roller such that the selected sheet can be pressed between the sheet transfer member roller and the press member roller at a boundary point on the selected sheet in a press direction,

wherein an imaginary straight line passing the boundary point in a direction perpendicular to the press direction intersects the sheet supporting surface area as seen in a view direction perpendicular to a thickness direction and a transferred the transfer direction of the selected sheet, and

wherein the pressing direction is parallel to another imaginary straight line passing the center of the sheet transfer member roller and the center of the press member roller.

10. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

a press member opposing the sheet transfer member for pressing the selected sheet between the sheet transfer member and the press member, said press member including a press surface for contacting the selected sheet and pressing the selected sheet between the press surface and the transfer surface,

wherein a compression resistance surface rigidity of one of the press and transfer surfaces is different from that of the other.

11. (original) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the sheet transfer member is a roller rotatable on an rotational axis.

12. (original) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the sheet transfer member is a belt rotatable along an annular course.

13. (canceled)

14. (currently amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the information reader includes a pair of input points opposed to each other in such a manner that the input points face to respective sides of the selected sheet in a thickness direction to read the information contained on the selected sheet through the input points.

15. (currently amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein when viewed from a direction perpendicular to a thickness direction and a transferred direction of the selected sheet such that the sheet supporting surface area would be extendable in a direction parallel to a support line direction which passes the information reading range, the ~~relation is~~ relations of  $\alpha > \tan^{-1}(h/L)$  and  $\alpha < \tan(1/\mu_{pg})$  are satisfied where:

$\alpha$  is an inclination angle between the support line direction and the tangential line at the boundary point of the transfer surface of the sheet transfer member,

$L$  is a distance between the boundary point of the transfer surface of the sheet transfer member and the information reading point in the support line direction,

$h$  is a distance between the boundary point of the transfer surface of the sheet transfer member and the sheet supporting surface area in a direction perpendicular to the support line direction, and

$\mu_{pg}$  is a frictional coefficient between the selected sheet and the transfer surface of the sheet transfer member.

16. (currently amended) An apparatus for handling sheets containing information thereon comprising:

a movable sheet transfer member including having a transfer surface for contacting a selected one of the sheets and transferring the selected sheet, along a transfer direction;

a sheet supporting surface area for contacting the selected sheet, and an information reader arranged along the transfer direction so as to face a surface the selected sheet which is being transferred and including delimiting an information reading range within which the information contained on the selected sheet is readable from the selected sheet by the information reader, and the information reading range including an information reading

point at which the information contained on the selected sheet is read, said information reading point being located within the information reading range,;

wherein when viewed from a direction perpendicular to a thickness direction and a transferred the transfer direction of the selected sheet such that the sheet supporting surface area would be extendable in a direction parallel to a support line direction which passes the information reading range, the equations  $[[J < (L^2/h)]] J_1 < (L_1/h_2)$ , and  $[[\alpha < \tan^{-1}(1/\mu_{pg})]] \alpha_1 < \tan(1/\mu_{pg})$  are satisfied where:

$\alpha_1$  is an inclination angle between the support line direction and a tangential line of a boundary point of the transfer surface of the sheet transfer member where the selected sheet starts to separate away from the transfer surface,

$L_1$  is a distance between the boundary point of the transfer surface of the sheet transfer member and the information reading point in the support line direction,

$h_2$  is a distance between the boundary point of the transfer surface of the sheet transfer member and the sheet supporting surface area in a direction perpendicular to the support line direction,

$\mu_{pg}$  is a frictional coefficient between the selected sheet and the transfer surface of the sheet transfer member, and

$J_1$  is a distance in the direction perpendicular to the support line direction between the boundary point and an intersecting point between an imaginary line passing the information reading point and extending

perpendicular to the support line direction and an imaginary line passing the boundary point of the transfer surface of the sheet transfer member and extending perpendicular to the tangential line of the boundary point of the transfer surface of the sheet transfer member.

17. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a supplemental sheet supporting surface area opposed to the sheet supporting surface and contactable with the one of the sheets, said supplemental sheet supporting surface area being movable with respect to the sheet supporting surface area such that the selected sheet is urged in a direction toward the sheet supporting surface area.

18. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 17, wherein the supplemental sheet supporting surface area is opposed to the information reading range so that the selected sheet is urged in a direction toward the information reading range.

19. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a supplemental sheet supporting surface area opposing the sheet supporting surface area and contactable with the selected sheet, said supplemental sheet supporting surface area extending in such a manner that the selected sheet is guided toward the sheet supporting surface area.

20. (original) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the sheet supporting surface area is curved.

21. (currently amended) An apparatus for handling sheets containing information thereon, comprising:

a movable sheet transfer member being including a transfer surface for contacting a selected one of the sheets and transferring the selected sheet[[,]] along a transfer direction;

a sheet supporting surface area for contacting the selected sheet[[,]];

an information reader arranged along the transfer direction so as to face a surface of the selected sheet and including: delimiting an information reading range within which the information contained on the selected sheet is readable from the selected sheet[, and]] by the information reader, the information reading range including an information reading point at which the information is read, said information reading point being located within the information reading range,

a distance detector facing the selected sheet for measuring a value changing in accordance with a change in distance between the selected sheet and the information reader[[,]];

wherein the information reader includes a light emitter for projecting a light to the selected sheet and a light receiver for receiving the light reflected by the selected sheet to read the information contained on the selected sheet from the selected sheet, and

wherein the light emitter is controlled in accordance with the value such that an intensity of the light emitted by the light emitter is increased in accordance with the increase of distance between the one of the sheets and the information reader.

22. (canceled)

23. (canceled)

24. (canceled)

25. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein:

the sheet transfer member includes a drive roller and a driven roller mounted along a clamping direction line;

$\alpha$  is an inclination angle between a support line direction and a tangential line of a boundary point of the transfer surface of the sheet transfer member from which boundary point the selected sheet starts to separate away from the transfer surface;

the clamping direction line is inclined by the angle  $\alpha$  causing an offset between the drive roller and the driven roller.

26. (currently amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the information recorded-contained on the selected sheet is readable in the information reading range.

27. (currently amended) The apparatus according to claim 9, wherein the information recorded contained on the selected sheet is readable from the information reading range.

28. (canceled)

29. (new) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the apparatus forms a part of an automated teller machine and the sheets containing information thereon are paper money from which information thereon is read by the information reader.